

CHRIS HAGIN

freelancing

May 23, 1976

Mr. James Earl Ray
Tennessee State Prison
Centennial Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37209

Dear Mr. Ray:

Recently your attorney, Bob Livingston, told me you were inquiring about a story I recently published concerning Judge Preston Battle's feelings toward giving you a trial, and the harassment he received for this by Governor Ellington, General Canale, Mayor Loeb and other civil leaders in Memphis and Tennessee.

As you surely know my source of that information is confidential, and I intend to keep it that way. I know that Bob, Bud, yourself and others have an idea who the source is, but it will forever remain an idea. Any good newsman, and I consider myself one, will not break a confidence, as will a good lawyer. Also, under present Tennessee Law, Tennessee Public Acts No. 27 of the 88th General Assembly, I cannot be made to reveal that source.

However, I can and am willing to go on the record and tell what is known to me about the situation, as I already have.

Jimmy, I consider Bob Livingston an honest and trustworthy man, and I am willing to do whatever I can to be of assistance to him in trying to obtain you a new trial. I personally believe you deserve one. But, with the recent ruling by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals that trial, if ever, is for off.

Mr. Livingston also informed me that you were worried about my former employment as a clerk for the F.B.I. I indeed did work for the F.B.I. for three months in 1968, after the assassination. Bob might have told you that I am no fan of the F.B.I., and I am sure that they do not see themselves as a fan of mine. Some of my recent stories about the F.B.I. and Justice Department have brought the ire of that sometimes criminal organization down on me.

I also understand that Mr. Lesar is no fan of mine, and has said things to infer that I can not be trusted. Unless it was information that I gave him in Cincinnati that was passed along to me by an employee of the Court, which has turned out to be true

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and damaging to your case, it is beyond me why Mr. Lesar dislikes me.

I do not intend to go into that kind of information in a letter, because it is something that cannot be discussed properly in a letter. But, I will say that after receiving the information Mr. Lesar should have made some changes in the presenting of the case to the court.

Mr. Lesar I am sure is doing what he considers best for you, and I admire a man that can give so much to one case forgetting all else. He has done things for you that no other man would or possibly could.

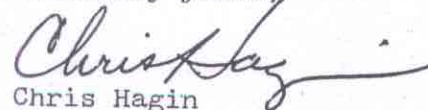
Mr. Livingston offered to bring me to the prison on February 9 of this year, but I understand you did not want me to come. If anytime in the future you wish to talk with me about the Battle incident, what happened in Cincinnati concerning Mr. Lesar or any other matter on or off the record, personally or as a newsman I will be glad to come and see you. Please notice the address.

If there is anything I can do for you please let me know.

Jimmy, I have some very close friends that are members of the Tennessee General Assembly that are intrested in your problems with the State of Tennessee, and we are presently discussing some things that might help you. I have informed Mr. Livingston of these.

With kindest regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,


Chris Hagin

NEW ADDRESS: 306 S. Cleveland, 62
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cc: Robert I. Livingston
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